

Dig This!

Autumn 2018



When you vote...

Think food sustainability. Question candidates. (See the article in the Summer edition of DigThis.)

Here are a few of the super gardens visited on DIG's annual Tour and Poker Run



St. John's



Alexandra's Bounty

Mary Street



St. Andrew's

Agri-Heros

The joys of gardening in Thailand



During the months of April & May, DIG members, Brandon Jaspers-Fayer & Adrian Hogendoorn were volunteering in Chiang Mai, Thailand, through an organization called Workaway.Info

There, they worked for a local Thai couple, helping them launch their community arts/ events space, café, and organic garden. Tom and Joon have an ambitious vision; to turn a former textile worker compound into a thriving rural hub, which it's hoped will attract local talent, and bring in coveted tourism dollars.

Their many international volunteers each bring something unique to the project. For example, Brandon used his creative eye and skilled hands to craft mango-wood shelves, sink fixtures, raised planters, and benches for the café. He also consulted in the design of the

gardens. Adrian spent his two months raising a flock of chickens, and growing heat-tolerant annuals (including vegetables), and fruit trees. The plants selected would have to withstand the searing 45°Celsius and drought-like conditions common to this part of the world during the dry season. Adrian consulted DIG's newsletters for tips on seed starting, seedling hardening, and companion planting, to ensure Tom & Joon's gardens would be self-sustaining and nourishing after he left.

Brandon and Adrian inadvertently promoted one of DIG's core mandates half-way around the world by promoting and educating others about sustainable production and access to local healthy foods. They look forward to continuing their work with DIG now that they have returned from their tour of Southeast Asia and the South Pacific!



In all things of nature there is something marvelous. Aristotle

Gardening and schools: a natural fit

As DIG's new school liaison, it is my job to reach out to teachers, administrators and parents of the Durham District School Board (DDSB, & the Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB), to help them with their garden and urban agriculture projects. It's a tall order, but fortunately as a teacher with the DDSB, I have an insider's perspective when it comes to gardening in a school setting. To get the ball rolling and to convince stakeholders to start or continue maintaining a garden or food project at their school, here is a top ten list of the benefits, in no particular order.

- 1 Children of all ages **love** playing in the dirt.
- 2 Gardening brings out a child's natural curiosity.
- 3 Gardening during recess gives students something to do.
- 4 Gardening at school gives the non-athletes something they can excel in.
- 5 Gardening is the perfect springboard to teaching a variety of science units, including grade 6 Biodiversity, grade 4 Habitats & Communities, grade 3 Plants & Soils, and grade 1 Living Things, not to mention inquiry-based learning in kindergarten.
- 6 High school students learn entrepreneurial skills when they are in charge of managing community gardens, aquaculture tanks, and school yard design projects
- 7 High school students can receive volunteer

hours that go towards their diploma when involved in gardening projects.

- 8 High school teachers can easily fit school gardening within the grades 11 & 12 Biology curriculum ("greening their school grounds").
- 9 Parent engagement increases when schools undertake community garden projects. Parents and students are invited to maintain gardens over the summer, and can "reap what they sow" during harvest time.
- 10 Growing food at school teaches students self-sufficiency, food security, and healthy living skills and provides them with the opportunity to try nutrient-dense local foods.

My winter newsletter article will delve deeper into curriculum specifics focusing on grades 3, 4, and 6, with real-life examples from my own classroom.



GardenTip

Extending the growing season – Check out these websites

www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/growing-season-zmaz94jjzraw

www.theglobeandmail.com/life/home-and-garden/gardening/seven-fresh-reasons-to-start-digging-in-the-garden-again/article13764871/

globalnews.ca/video/1587678/extending-vegetable-season



Watch for it ~ DIG's promotional video, on our website.

September 20 ~ Durham College Centre for Food Harvest Dinner. Tickets are sold out. To be added to a waiting list please contact Nicole Gibbens.

<https://durhamcollege.ca/academic-schools/centre-for-food/harvest-dinner>

November 1-4 ~ Resetting the Table - Food Secure Canada's (FSC) 10th Assembly. This is Canada's largest and most vibrant food assembly, hosted in Montreal. The full program is available and registration is open.

<https://foodsecurecanada.org/>

Add some dazzling colour to your table ~

Hummus with Beets



- 540 ml can chickpeas
- 3 cloves peeled garlic
- 3 red beets
- 1/4 cup beet juice
- 1 tbsp tahini
- 2 tsp sea salt
- 2 lemons, juiced
- olive oil

Drain and rinse the chickpeas, discarding the canning fluid.

Peel and dice the beets to 1/2" cubes. Put them in a saucepan and just cover with water. Cover, bring to a boil, then simmer until they are very tender (about 25 minutes). The beets need to be bordering on mushy. Set aside some of the cooking water (beet juice). Allow beets to cool.

Place all ingredients – reserving half the salt, half the lemon juice and all the olive oil – in a food processor, or simply add everything to the pot of cooked beets and use a stick blender. Blend until smooth. Taste and adjust with more salt and lemon juice. Refrigerate.

Drizzle with olive oil before serving.

DigThis!

A quarterly publication of Durham Integrated Growers

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